

Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010

Statement on the Situation in Cuba

March 24, 2010

Recent events in Cuba, including the tragic death of Orlando Zapata Tamayo, the repression visited upon *las Damas de Blanco*, and the intensified harassment of those who dare to give voice to the desires of their fellow Cubans, are deeply disturbing.

These events underscore that instead of embracing an opportunity to enter a new era, Cuban authorities continue to respond to the aspirations of the Cuban people with a clenched fist.

Today I join my voice with brave individuals across Cuba and a growing chorus around the world in calling for an end to the repression, for the immediate, unconditional release of all political prisoners in Cuba, and for respect for the basic rights of the Cuban people.

During the course of the past year, I have taken steps to reach out to the Cuban people and to signal my desire to seek a new era in relations between the Governments of the United States and Cuba. I remain committed to supporting the simple desire of the Cuban people to freely determine their future and to enjoy the rights and freedoms that define the Americas and that should be universal to all human beings.

NOTE: The statement referred to Cuban dissident Orlando Zapata Tamayo, who died in prison on February 23 following a hunger strike; and *las Damas de Blanco*, a human rights group comprised of female relatives of Cuban political prisoners. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this statement.

Categories: Statements by the President : Cuba, situation in.

Subjects: Cuba : Democracy and human rights issues; Cuba : Democracy efforts; Cuba : Diplomatic relations with U.S.; Cuba : Ladies in White organization; Cuba : Political prisoners, condition of.

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